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Cupid and Psyche :

A MYTHOLOGICAL PLAY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

WITH

GRAND TABLEAU.

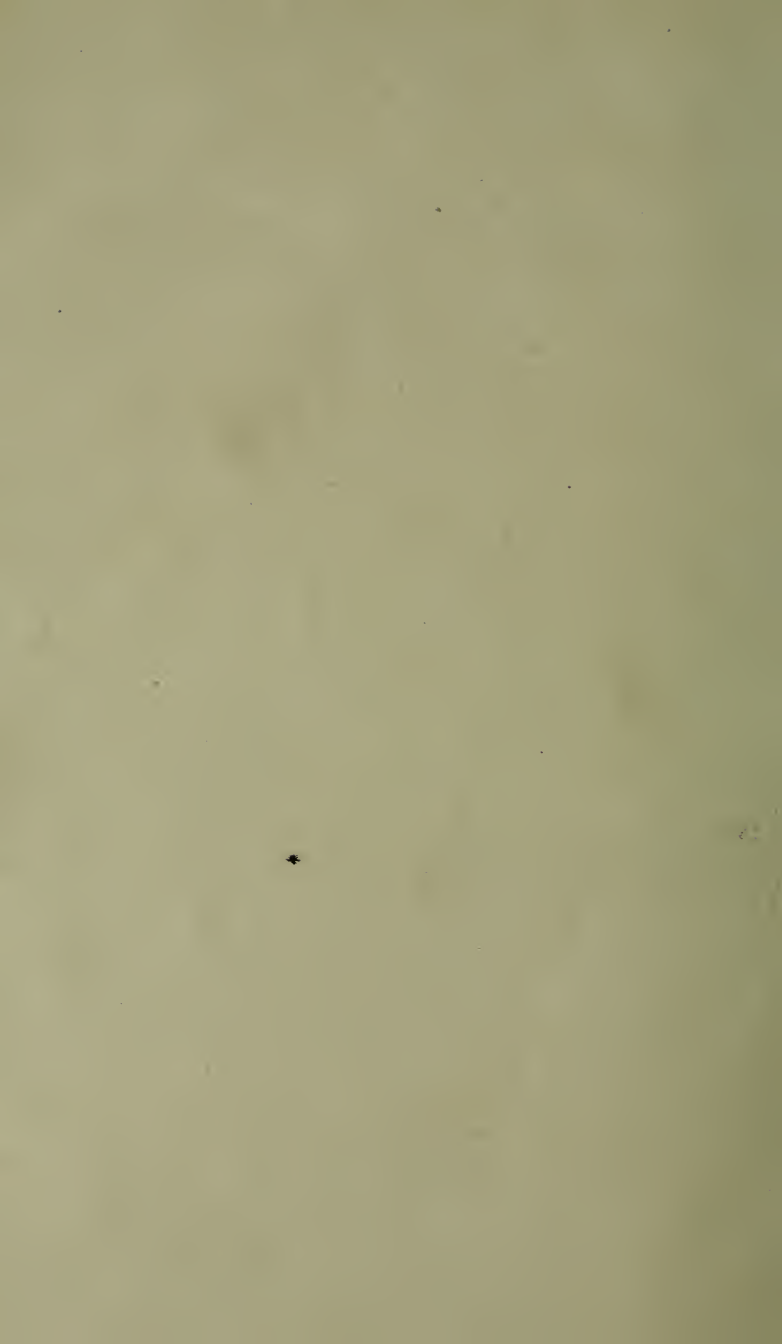
ARRANGED FOR THE STAGE, FROM THE CELEBRATED
FABLE OF APUELEIUS.

BY S. HOWELL.

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TO THE READER.

In the Dramatic arrangement of the beautiful and justly celebrated fable of CUPID AND PSYCHE, which is here given, the language of the author is used throughout, except for the abbreviation of the narrative, and for a better effect upon the stage.

The scenes described are to be found, with the illustrations, in various mythological works; but many additions appropriate to the subject are introduced, to make the play a first-class production.

The Phrygian Dance is the crowning feature of the play. Although an innovation, it is introduced to bring on the stage the young people of both sexes, as participants in a scene that will have its effect in banishing from the boards those extravagancies that for years past have been such a scandal upon the stage.

The Grand Tableau in the Fifth Act is taken from the celebrated painting of "The Marriage," by Raphael, in the Farnesina, at Rome—the only change in the picture being an addition to the wardrobe of some of the principal characters.

S. H.

New Orleans, July, 1873.

COSTUME.

I have selected, as the most appropriate, the costume of the Greeks during the classic period. At that time the ladies adorned their heads with flowers, and the hair was tastefully dressed in clustered curls, fastened by costly pins; the patterns of dresses were much the same as those of the present day.

For the Phrygian male dancers, tight sleeves, embroidered, ribbons, and a wreath adorning the head. The upper part of the leg bare, with boots laced in front. For the female dancers, the spangled tarletan patterns of dress would be appropriate, and the brow encircled with a wreath of roses would add much to the appearance.

The custom of the Greek ladies in having one side of the dress open up to the knee or hips, must be observed throughout.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

ACT 1.—VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA.

NEPTUNE AND AMPHITRITE.

THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO AT MILETUS.

ACT 2.—A GORGEOUS PALACE.

ACT 3.—GOLDEN CHAMBER OF VENUS.

ACT 4.—THE MOUTH OF A CAVERN.

(On a black curtain painted in red.)

PLUTO (in the centre).

PROSERPINE CARRIED OFF BY PLUTO.

THE FURIES.

THE FATES.

CHARON IN HIS BOAT.

THE DOOR OF HELL.

ACT 5.—JUPITER'S TEMPLE AT OLYMPIA.

GRAND TABLEAU.

THE ENTRANCE OF PSYCHE INTO HEAVEN.

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED.

CUPID, *the God of Love.*
JUPITER, *King of the Gods.*
MERCURY, *Messenger of Jupiter.*
THE KING, *Father of Psyche.*
ATE, *Attendant on Proserpine.*
ORACLE, *at the Temple of Apollo.*
DANCERS.
PSYCHE, *the Daughter of a King.*
VENUS, *the Goddess of Beauty and Love.*
JUNO, *the Queen of Heaven.*
CERES, *the Goddess of Agriculture.*
PROSERPINE, *the Queen of Hell.*
HABIT, *the Servant of Venus.*
EUPHRASIE, } *the Sisters of Psyche.*
HELENA, }
ATTENDANTS.
DANCERS.

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY.

NEPTUNE, *the King of the Seas.*
PLUTO, *the King of Hell.*
VULCAN, *the God of Blacksmiths.*
MARS, *the God of War.*
APOLLO, *the God of Music.*
HERCULES.
GANYMEDE, *the Cup Bearer of the Gods.*
BACCHUS, *the God of Wine.*
PALAEMON, *a Sea God.*
SALACIA.
AMPHITRITE, *the Wife of Neptune.*
MINERVA, *the Goddess of Wisdom.*
DIANA, *the Goddess of Hunting.*
HEBE, *the Goddess of Youth.*
DAUGHTERS OF NERIUS.
NEREIDS AND TRITONS.
THE NINE MUSES.
THE HOURS.
THE GRACES.

CUPID AND PSYCHE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Open Sea in the rear. (A platform of proper size to represent the surface and beneath the sea is erected about the middle part of the stage. The sea is hid from view under the surface of the platform by a curtain. Music. Venus, in a chariot drawn by two sea-horses, standing, with reins in hand, her hair loosely about her shoulders, rises slowly to the surface.)*

Venus (passionately). Behold, how the primal parent of all things—behold, how the first source of the elements—behold, how I, the genial Venus of the whole world, am treated! My sacred rites are abandoned—my temples suffered to decay—my cushions trampled under foot—my ceremonies neglected—my statues kept without chaplets, and my desolate altars defiled with cold ashes. The honor belonging to my majesty shared by a mortal girl! My name, that is registered in heaven, profaned by the dross of earth! I must be content, forsooth, with the uncertain homage of a vicarious worship, and with my share in expiations offered to me in common with another! And a mortal girl to go about in my likeness! It is all for nought that the shepherd Paris, whose justice and good faith the mighty Jupiter approved, preferred me to such mighty goddesses, on account of my unparalleled beauty. But this creature, whoever she be, shall not so joyously usurp my honors; for I will cause her to repent of her contraband good looks! Come forth, my son. (*Cupid, with his bow, and quiver full of arrows, comes running in*). Thou art a malapert boy, who with evil manners set at nought all ordinary institutions, by running at night from one man's house to another, and blighting matrimonial happiness on all sides, committing such mischiefs with impunity, and doing nothing that is good; but you are my son, and I forgive these irregularities. I will take you to the city that gave birth to this hated Psyche; and I conjure you by the ties of maternal love—by the sweet wounds inflicted by your arrow—by the warmth, delightful as honey, of that

torch, to afford your parent her revenge, aye, and a full one too; and as you respect myself, severely punish this rebellious beauty; and this one thing, above all, use your endeavors to effect: let this maiden be seized with the most burning love for the lowest of mankind—one whom fortune has stripped of rank, patrimony, and even of personal safety—one so degraded that he cannot find his equal in wretchedness throughout the whole world! I will then be revenged. (*Sits.*) I command the attendance of the powers of the deep. (*A conch shell is sounded below the surface, when Nereids suddenly arise, one with a silken canopy protects Venus from the sun, one holds a mirror in front of her, one is ready with brush and comb; the others are yoked to the chariot to be in attendance.*) Be seated, my son. (*Cupid gets behind Venus in the chariot, and commences shooting his arrows, with love mottoes on the shafts, among the audience.*) Onward to the palace of Oceanus. (*The curtain in front of the platform is suddenly drawn aside, the scenes in the rear are moved to represent the figures as in motion. Beneath the surface is Neptune and Amphitrite his wife, seated in his chariot, drawn by two horses, holding his trident in hand. Palaemon in his chariot, drawn by dolphins, is in the rear. Salacia, with a lapful of fish, is in the front seat, and the two daughters of Nereus are on the back seat, singing in harmony with the music. Tritons and Nereids are moving about, following the procession. The chariots are arranged for the wheels to revolve, and to complete the spectacle the animals must appear in motion. On the last stage scene is a likeness of Oceanus, when the procession stops, and the scene changes.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Temple of Apollo at Miletus, painted on the back scene; the side scenes to represent the woods.*

Enter KING and PSYCHE.

King. With all thy divine beauty, my beloved daughter, I fear the enmity of the gods has kept you from being happily wedded. Your elder sisters, whose more moderate charms have not been bruited about among the nations, have been wooed and won by kings, while you, my beloved Psyche, still remain a lonely virgin.

Psyche. My royal father, I am sick at heart, and hate my own beauty, though it delighteth all the rest of the world. I can but remain at home and bewail my lonely condition. I am faint in body and sick of life.

King. I will consult the very ancient oracle of the Milesian god, and ask of that mighty divinity, with prayer and victims, a husband for thee, my beloved daughter, whom no one cares to have. (*Calls.*) Apollo, come forth! (*Apollo appears at the door of the temple, with his bow and arrows in hand.*) Let the fate of my dearest daughter Psyche be known. (*A curtain is drawn*

aside, when Apollo points to verses written in front of the temple, which are repeated by the oracle within.)

Oracle—"On the mountain summit laid,
In her grave-clothes be the maid;
Never shall thine eyes behold
Son-in-law of mortal mould;
But a monster girt with wings,
Fiercest of created things;
Scattering flames his hours employing,
Heaven alike and earth annoying;
Him the dread decrees of fate
Destine for thy daughter's mate."

King. The sacred oracle is given, and its celestial mandates must be complied with. Oh, my daughter, my daughter! what affliction is this? Till now I have led a happy life; the future is desolate to me. Many days will we pass in grief, and tears and lamentations; but the dire oracle must be fulfilled. The procession will be formed for thy deadly nuptials; the lighted torch will burn ashy black and sooty; the strains of conjugal Juno's pipes will be changed for the plaintive Lydian melody; the joyful hymenial song will sink into a dismal wailing, and my dearest Psyche will wipe away her tears with the nuptial veil itself. I will proclaim a public mourning for the solemn preliminaries of this direful marriage, when the procession of the living dead moves on. Let us depart, my daughter, and prepare for this sad procession, that takes you to misery, and perhaps to death. (*Weeps.*)

Psyche. Why torment your unfortunate old age with continual weeping? Why waste your breath, which is more dear to me than to you, with repeated lamentations? Why deform your features, to me so venerable, with unavailing tears? Why lacerate my eyes in afflicting your own? Why tear your hoary locks? Why beat your bosom and those hallowed breasts? Are these to be the glorious results to you of my surpassing beauty? Too late do you perceive that you have been smitten by the deadly shaft of envy. Alas! then should you have wept and lamented, then bewailed me as lost, when tribes and nations celebrated me with divine honors, and when with one consent, they styled me a new-born Venus. Now do I feel and see that through that name of Venus alone I perish. Lead me away, then, and expose me on the rock to which the oracle has devoted me. I am in haste to encounter these auspicious nuptials; I am in haste to see this noble bridegroom of mine. Why should I delay? Why avoid his approach, who has been born for the destruction of the whole world. Let us away. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—*The interior of a gorgeous Palace. A thick planted grove of trees in the rear, in the centre of which is a fountain playing; aside is a high overhanging rock. Psyche walking about bewildered.*

Psyche. All around me is splendor and magnificence. How came I here? Last night I slept on the surface of yonder hanging rock; abandoned, I lay trembling and weeping in dismay; the wild breeze of the gently blowing Zephyr played round my garments; in my slumbers methought a god wafted me with his tranquil breath adown the lofty mountain side, and laid me softly on the flowery turf in the lap of the valley.

Attendant (within). Why, lady, are you astonished at such vast riches? All are yours. Betake yourself, therefore, to yonder couch, and refresh your wearied limbs, and when you think proper repair to the bath; for we whose voices you now hear are your hand-maidens, and will carefully attend to all your commands; and, when we have dressed you, a royal banquet will be placed before you without delay.

Psyche. I am sensible of the goodness of divine Providence, and obedient to the admonitions of the unembodied voices to be relieved of fatigue by sleep, and then to the bath. (*Observes a semicircular dais with a raised seat in the palace. Sits, when refreshments are sent up.*) Not one human being can I see, but I hear voices intended for servants alone. Music approaches. (*A harp is played outside, accompanied by voices, singing the following:*)

“Lull to rest this causeless fear;
Psyche! thou art mistress here.
Happy, beyond human measure,
Slake thy thirsting soul in pleasure;
Slaves to thy majestic lover,
Air-formed spirits around thee hover,
Ever for thy bidding stay,
Instant thy commands obey.”

Attendants (outside). Lady, when you have finished the repast, retire to your couch, when soft music will lull you to slumber. (*Psyche leaves the table and retires to the couch; the refreshments disappear, and the stage is suddenly darkened.*)

Psyche. With all this splendor, how lonesome is the place. I am filled with terror; but may the gods protect me. (*Lies down, when the music begins, and soon lulls her to sleep. When the music ceases, Cupid enters by a side door and sits at the foot of the couch.*) (Photograph.)

Cupid. How much I may offend my mother Venus in claiming this divine creature as a wife, I know full well; but she is mine,

and will ever remain so. (*Kisses her.*) Sleep, hapless fair, in happy ignorance; sleep, pure spotless dove; let thy affection shun the public eye. (*Kisses her, then retires to the head of the couch, and is partly visible.*)

“Light of my soul! far dearer than the day!”

Psyche (sleeping). “Me all the bliss of earth could ill repay
For thy most sweet divine society.”

Attendants (without). Lady, awake from thy slumbers. (*The stage is suddenly lighted, when Psyche awakes surprised, rubbing her eyes.*)

Psyche. Oh, what heavenly dream was this! My sweet, my husband, I can discern your presence with my ears and hands, (*Touches him,*) though not with mine eyes.

Cupid. Most charming Psyche! dear wife, cruel fortune now threatens you with deadly peril, which needs I think to be guarded against with the most vigilant attention; for ere long your sisters, who are alarmed at the report of your death, in their endeavors to discover traces of you, will arrive at yonder rock. If then you should chance to hear their lamentations, make them no reply; no, nor even so much as turn your eyes towards them. By doing otherwise, you will cause most grievous sorrow to me, and utter destruction to yourself.

Psyche. If you desire it, I consent to act agreeably to your wish; but to be confined in a splendid prison, deprived of human conversation, and not even allowed to relieve the minds of my sisters who are sorrowing for me, nor even to see them, is hard indeed.

Cupid. (Takes her hand.) Do not be disturbed with grief, my own true love, but act just as you please, and comply with the baneful dictates of your inclination. I yield to your entreaties, and give my permission for you to see your sisters, and present them with as much gold and as many jewels as you please; but remember my serious admonitions; and I warn you, my dearest Psyche, not to be persuaded, by the pernicious advice of your sisters, to make enquiries concerning the form of your husband, lest by a sacrilegious curiosity you might be cast down from an exalted position of good fortune, and never again feel my embrace. Again I say, beware how you act. (*Disappears.*)

Psyche. I thank you, my kind husband, for your indulgence. I would suffer death a hundred times rather than be deprived of your delightful company; for I love you, yes, I doat upon you to desperation, whoever you are; aye, even as I love my own soul, nor would I give you in exchange for Cupid himself. He is gone. (*Kneels.*) May the gods protect me in my loneliness, and let me soon embrace my dear sisters.

(EUPHRASIE and HELENA appear on the surface of the rock.)

Euphrasie. Psyche, dear Psyche, at length we have found you. Bless the gods, you are alive.

Psyche (running out). Here I am whom you mourn. Dry up your tears; we will soon embrace. Haste, Zephyr, on thy gentlest breeze, and bear my sisters to their Psyche. (*Goes to the side and waves her hand.*) This will be a day of joy. (*The sisters enter and affectionately embrace Psyche.*) Now come, enter my dwelling in gladness, and cheer up your afflicted spirits with your Psyche.

Attendants (without). Lady, we are ready to obey your commands.

Psyche. You hear my attendants; they are numerous; all I desire is at my command; see the vast treasures of this golden palace. My husband has instructed me to provide you with all the gold and jewels you may want. Take this necklace—how well it becomes you, my sister Euphrasie; and you, my dear sister Helena, wear this bracelet for my sake.

Helena. And pray, my dear Psyche, who is the master of this celestial wealth; what kind of person and what sort of a husband is the one chosen for you?

Psyche. My husband is young, very good looking, with cheeks as yet only shaded with soft down; he is for the most part engaged in rural occupations, and hunting on the mountains. Pass on to the next room; I will soon be with you. (*The sisters go out, when Cupid appears, partly visible.*)

Cupid. Stay, Psyche; let me once more admonish you. Are you aware what a mighty peril fortune is preparing to launch against you—one, too, unless you take strenuous precautions against it, will, ere long, confront you hand to hand? These perfidious she-wolves are planning base stratagems against you with all their might, to the end that they may prevail upon you to view my features, which, as I have told you, if you once see, you will see no more. Be careful not to listen to or answer any inquiries about your husband. A child will be born to us, which, if you preserve my secret in silence, will be born divine; but, if you profane, it will be mortal. Therefore, I say, be cautious how you act; your own blood is in arms against you. Take pity on yourself, and on me. (*Disappears.*)

(*Enter EUPHRASIE and HELENA.*)

Euphrasie. Sister, what a vast number of necklaces there are in this house, and the splendid silk dresses are fabulous. What brilliant gems and what heaps of gold you tread upon in every direction. Besides, you possess a husband so handsome that there lives not in the world a happier woman than you.

Psyche. My darling Euphrasie, how much cause of happiness have I. My husband is a native of the adjoining province, is a

merchant with abundance of money, a man of middle age, with a few gray hairs sprinkled here and there on his head.

Helena (aside to Euphrasie). The huzzy! she tells a different story of her husband. He was first a youth, and is now a middle-aged man. Let us carry out our plans.

Euphrasie. Happy indeed are you, my dear Psyche, and fortunate in your very ignorance of such magnitude. Then you are without a thought upon your danger; while we, who watch over your interests with the most vigilant care, are in anguish at your lost condition: for we have learned for a truth, nor can we, as being sharers in your sorrows and misfortunes, conceal it from you, that it is an enormous serpent gliding along in many folds and coils, with a neck swollen with deadly venom, and prodigious gaping jaws, that secretly sleeps by you at night. Do, for a moment, recall to mind the Pythian oracle, which declared that you were destined to become the wife of a fierce and truculent animal. Besides, many of the husbandmen, who are in the habit of hunting all round the country, and ever so many of the neighbors, have observed him returning from his feeding place in the evening, and swimming across the shoals of the neighboring streams. All declare, too, that he will not long continue to pamper you with delicacies, but when you arrive at a certain state, he will devour you as being a most exquisite morsel. It is now for you to consider whether you shall think fit to listen to us, who are so anxious for your precious safety, and avoiding death, live with us secure from danger, or be buried in the entrails of a most savage monster.

Psyche (excited). Dearest sisters, you have acted towards me as you ought, and with your usual affectionate care; and indeed it appears to me that those who gave you this information have not invented a falsehood. For in fact, I have never yet beheld my husband's face, nor do I know at all whence he comes. I only hear him speak in an undertone by night, and have to bear with a husband of an unknown appearance, and one that has an utter aversion to the light of day. I consequently have full reason to be of your opinion, that he may be some monster or other. Besides, he is always terrifying me from attempting to behold him, and threatens some shocking misfortune as the consequence of indulging any curiosity to view his features. Now, therefore, if you are able to give any saving aid to your sister in this perilous emergency, defer it not for a moment.

Helena. Since the ties of blood oblige us to have no fear of peril before our eyes, when your safety is to be ensured, we will discover to you the only method which will lead to your preservation; it will be effectual. Conceal in your bed a dagger; see that it is whetted to a keen edge; and hide likewise under some covering of the surrounding tapestry, a lamp, well trimmed and

full of oil, and shining with a bright light. Make these preparations with the utmost secrecy, and after the monster has glided into the bed as usual, when he is now stretched out at length, fast asleep and breathing heavily, then go softly along with bare feet and on tiptoe, free the lamp from its place of concealment in the dark, and borrow the aid of its light to execute your noble purpose; then at once boldly raising your right hand, bring down the keen weapon with all your might, and cut off the head of the noxious serpent at the nape of the neck. We will keep anxious watch over you to see that you are in safety, and wed you to your wish. The shades of night have overtaken us, and Psyche, dear sister, summon Zephyr to our aid, to waft us to our peaceful homes. Our loving hearts will be ever with you. (*Psyche goes to the side, motions with her hand. The sisters embrace her, and exult.*)

Psyche. They are gone, and my purpose to destroy the vile beast is fixed. As a husband, I love him; as a beast, I hate him. What if I should be deceived, and my blow miss its mark, who is here to protect me? Away with this fear, and let the work of death begin; let this dagger tell the tale when darkness approaches. Oh! unhappy fate, to be linked in life with a demon; but, ye gods, aid me to crush out his vile existence. Let me prepare and know no fear. (*Puts a lighted lamp behind the curtain; the stage is suddenly darkened; she retires to her couch.*) The monster will soon be in; I will feign sleep, to sooner carry out my purpose. (*Lies down, when Cupid enters and stands in front of the couch.*)

Cupid. She sleeps. (*Kisses her.*) I will not disturb thee, dearest Psyche. Peace to thy gentle spirit; thou, who knowest no evil, may the gods protect thee in thy slumbers. My eye-lids are heavy, and sleep will not long be denied me. (*Lies down on a couch, when music soon lulls him to sleep.*)

Psyche. The monster has glided into his bed, and is stretched out at length, fast asleep, and breathing heavily. This dagger has been well whetted, and the lamp trimmed for the purpose. I feel a masculine courage in doing this deed; away, then, with all fear, and let me to the task. (*Goes with the lamp in the left hand, and the dagger in the right, ready to strike. She raises it, starts back, puts the lamp hastily down, and places the dagger in her breast.*) (*Excited.*) Oh! ye gods! what is this I see? Cupid, the god of love, and sweetest of all creatures, is my husband. (*Kneels.*) Let me thank thee, gods, for thy kind favors. (*Rises.*) This, then, is the monster my sisters would have me believe is my husband. May all living monsters be of his kind. (*Kisses him.*) Joy, happiness, love, and the full pleasures of life are now my lot. Look at the genial locks of his golden head, beaming with ambrosial perfume; the orb'd curls that fall over his milk-white neck! One more look, and then to my couch, but not to

sleep. (*Takes the lamp again to the couch.*) On his shoulders are dewy wings of brilliant whiteness; the pinions are at rest, yet the tender down that fringes the feathers wantons to and fro in unceasing play. At the foot of the bed lays the bow and quiver; let me touch the point of an arrow; how sharp it is; some tiny drops of blood come forth. This is love with love. (*Lays down the lamp.*) One more kiss before I go, for fear he should awake. (*Kisses him.*) I am fastened to this spot; no power on earth, nor can the gods take me from it. Let me again view the heavenly features of my husband. (*Takes up the lamp, holds it to the face of Cupid, and spills a drop of burning oil on his shoulders; he starts up suddenly, when Psyche shrieks and lets fall the lamp; the dagger falls from her dress, and she stands bewildered.*)

Cupid (sorrowful). Oh simple, simple Psyche! for you I have been unmindful of the commands of my mother Venus; for when she bade me cause you to be infatuated with passions for some base and abject man, I chose rather to fly to you myself as a lover. That in this I act inconsiderately, I know but too well. I, that redoubtable archer, have wounded myself with my own arrow, and have made you my wife, that I forsooth might be thought by you to be a serpent, that you might cut off my head, which bears those very eyes that have so doated upon you. This was the danger that I told you again and again; against this was what I so vehemently forwarned you of. But as for those choice counsellors of yours, they shall speedily feel my vengeance, for giving you such pernicious advice; but you I will only punish by my flight. (*Attempts to vanish; she clings to him; he breaks from her and goes out; she attempts to follow him, when a large serpent on a tree unwinds himself and hisses at her; Psyche shrieks and falls on the stage. The curtain falls.*)

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—*The Golden Chamber of Venus. Venus discovered reclining on her couch, her hair flowing about her shoulders, and a gold band encircling her forehead.*

(*Enter JUNO, with her Peacock.*)

Juno. Most glorious mistress, your son is confined to his bed by a severe burn: is in great pain, and his cure is doubtful. All sorts of scandalous reports are flying about concerning the whole family of Venus. It is in every body's mouth that the mother and son had gone off—the one to a mountain, to carry on an intrigue with a girl; the other to amuse herself with swimming in the sea.

Venus. So, then, this hopeful son of mine has got some mistress or other. Come, now, you who are the only one to serve me with true affection, what is the name of her who has thus decoyed the ingenious and beardless boy? Is she one of the tribe of Nymphs, or of the number of Hours, or of the choir of Muses, or belonging to my own train of Graces?

Juno. I am not sure, mistress. I think, though, if I remember right, he is said to have fallen desperately in love with a girl whose name is Psyche.

Venus (starting up, greatly excited). What! of all wenches in the world, is he in love with Psyche, the usurper of my beauty and the rival of my fame? And by way of additional insult, he takes me for a go-between, through whose instrumentality he made acquaintance with the girl. Summon the vile boy to my presence. (*A conch is sounded, when Cupid enters; Juno goes out.*) This is pretty conduct indeed! and very becoming our dignified birth, and your sobriety of character! In the first place, to trample under foot the commands of your mother, your sovereign mistress, and refrain from tormenting my enemy with an ignoble love; and then, at your age—a mere boy—to take her to your profligate and immature embraces, on purpose, I suppose, that I might endure the vexation of having my enemy for my daughter-in-law. But doubtless you suppose, you scamp, you seducer, you unlovable boy, that you are my only high-born son, and that I am too old to have another. I would have you know then that I will have another son, a much better one than you; nay, what's more, that you may be fully sensible of the disgrace, I will adopt one of the sons of my slaves, and to him will I give those wings, and that torch, that bow, and those arrows, and all that equipment which I bestowed on you, for purposes very different from these; for no part whatever of this apparatus was supplied at your father's expense. You have been badly inclined from your childhood; many a time have you struck your elders, and even myself, your mother; myself, I say, you parricide, you are every day exposing before the world. Many a time you have struck me, and you pay no more attention to me than if I were a widow. You do not even fear your step-father, that most brave and mighty warrior; quite the contrary, indeed, for you are evermore setting him after wenches, to my torment. But I will make you repent of these tricks of yours, and that you shall find the match a sour and bitter one. (*Ceres and Juno enter.*) Most opportunely are you come to appease that violence which has taken possession of my raging bosom. Enquire for me, I beg, with the utmost care and diligence, after that runaway vagabond Psyche; for the infamous stories about my family, and the conduct of my son, who does not deserve to be named, cannot be unknown to you.

Ceres. What mighty offence, good mistress, has your son com-

mitted, that you should thwart his pleasures with such stubborn resolution, and be impatient to destroy her with whom he is in love? Is it a crime if he has freely indulged his liking for a pretty girl? Are you ignorant of his sex and his youth? Surely you have forgotten how many years old he is; or is it because he carries his years so prettily, that you would for ever fancy him a boy? Is it possible that you, who are his mother, and a woman of understanding, can persist in prying inquisitively into the gaieties of your handsome son, finding fault with his indiscretions, taking him to task for his amours, and reproving in him your own acts and voluptuous suggestions? But what god, or what man, will bear with you, when you are every where scattering amorous desires among people, and at the same time would restrain the gallantries of your own house, and shut up the universal magazine of female frailties?

Venus. Let our conversation cease; you are disposed to treat with ridicule the injuries I have received. (*To Cupid.*) Begone from my sight, thou vilest of wretches. (*Exit Cupid.*) Let me now prepare for my revenge. Summon Mercury to me. (*A conch is sounded, when Mercury enters.*) Take this book; go at once to Jupiter, and bid him issue his proclamation for the return of my female slave to me forthwith. She is well described in the book, and let no one seek to shelter her, on pain of my displeasure. She is the fugitive daughter of a king; my handmaid, and by name Psyche. Begone; and see that my commands are speedily executed. (*Exit Mercury*) Where are now those servants of mine, Habit, Anxiety and Sorrow. Let them be in attendance. (*A conch is sounded, when Habit enters, dragging in Psyche.*)

Habit. Mistress, I have brought you the good-for-nothing wench, found lurking near the palace gate. She has given us abundant trouble in finding her, and may she receive without delay the penalty of her obstinate contumacy.

Venus (sarcastically). At length you have deigned to pay your respects to your mother-in-law, or rather are you come to see your sick husband, who is yet dangerously ill from the wound you gave him? But make yourself easy; for I will at once give you such a reception as a good mother-in-law ought to give. Summon my servants. (*A conch is sounded, when Anxiety and Sorrow enter.*) When I have finished with this vile servant of mine, you will take her out to be well scourged and tormented. (*Anxiety and Sorrow bow, and retire.*) Just look at her! (*Laughing boisterously.*) Her interesting state quite moves my compassion. Fortunate indeed am I, who in the very flower of my age am to be called a grandmother! And the son of a vile handmaid is to hear himself called the grandson of Venus! And yet I talk nonsense in calling him my grandson; for ill-assorted marriages, contracted, too, in a country place, without

any witnesses and without the father's consent, cannot possibly be deemed legitimate ; consequently this child will be a bastard, even if I do suffer you to bring it to the light at all. (*Going up to her in a defiant manner.*) You seem to me, such an ugly slave as you now are, to be likely to gain lovers in no other way than by diligent drudgery. I will therefore, myself, for once make trial of your industrious habits. (*Takes several papers of seeds and mixes them in a basin.*) Take and separate this promiscuous mass of seeds, and having properly placed each grain in its place, and so sorted the whole, give me a proof of your expedition by finishing the task before evening. Do you see yonder grove stretching along the margin of a river, whose deep eddies receive the waters of a neighboring fountain? There shining sheep, of a golden color, wander about feeding, without a shepherd. I desire that you bring me immediately a flake of that precious wool, get it how you may. Do you see the summit of yonder lofty mountain? From that peak fall the dusky waters of a black fountain, which, after being confined in the neighboring valley, irrigate the Stydian marshes, and supply the hoarse streams of Coeytus? After you have brought me the wool, take me this urn of polished crystal, and bring me ice-cold water drawn from the midst of the lofty fountain. After you have finished this last duty, there is one more task, my dear, (*sincerely*) which you must perform. Take this box, and direct your course to the infernal regions and the deadly palace of Pluto. Then, presenting the box to Proserpine, say Venus requests you to send her a small portion of your beauty, at least as much as may be sufficient for one short day; for she has consumed all the beauty she possessed through the attention which she pays to her sick son. Now begone, and return with the utmost expedition; for I must adorn myself with this beauty of Proserpine, before I go to the theatre of the gods. Juno, have ready my chariot, which Vulcan constructed with exquisite skill, and presented to me on the celebration of my marriage. It is of burnished gold, and more precious to me than life. Let us be gone, and drink the nectar of Jupiter, and let love ever be in the ascendant. (*Exeunt Venus, Juno and Ceres.*)

Psyche (*Kneeling*). They are gone! Ye gods, protect me! I have arrived at the extremity of my evil fortune. To throw myself headlong from the tower in the distance would place me in the infernal regions; but to earth I never could return. (*Rising.*) No; I will carry out the wishes of this tyrant Venus, defeat her mad schemes for revenge, and long be the wife of Cupid, the god of love. (*Exit.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—*The Suburbs of the City of Tenarus. A Cavern in front, with an obscure opening.*

(Enter MERCURY, with his magic wand, leading in PSYCHE.)

Mercury. Psyche, you will pass through this cavity, which is Pluto's breathing hole, and an untravelled road presents itself to the view through the yawning gap. As soon as you have passed the threshold of this cavity, you will proceed in a direct path to the palace of Pluto. You ought not, however, to pass through these shades with empty hands, but should take a sop of barley bread, soaked in hydromel, in each hand, and in your mouth two pieces of money. And when you have accomplished a good part of your deadly journey, you will meet a lame ass laden with wood, with a driver as lame as himself, who will ask you to reach him certain cords, to fasten the burden, which has fallen from the ass; but be careful that you pass by him in silence. Then, without any delay, proceed till you arrive at the dead river, where Charon, immediately demanding his fee, ferries the passengers over in his patched boat to the farthest shore. Avarice lives among the dead; nor does Charon himself nor the father Pluto, though so great a god, do any thing gratuitously. To the squalid old man you will see, give one of the pieces of money which you carry with you, yet in such a manner that he may take it with his own hand from your mouth. While you are passing over the sluggish river, a certain dead old man, floating on its surface and raising his putrid hand, will entreat you to take him into the boat. Beware, however, of yielding to any impulse of unlawful pity. Having passed over the river and proceeded to a little distance beyond it, you will see certain old women, weaving a web, who will request you to lend them a helping hand; but it is not lawful for you to touch the web. For all these and many other particulars are snares prepared for you by Venus, that you may drop one of the sops out of your hand. But do not suppose that this would be a trifling loss, since the want of only one of the sops would prevent your return to light; for a huge dog, with three large fierce and formidable necks and heads, barking, with his thundering jaw terrifies in vain the dead whom he cannot injure; and always watching before the threshold and black palace of Proserpine, guards the void Plutonian mansions. Having appeased this dog with one of your sops, you may easily pass by him, and then you will immediately enter the presence of Proserpine herself, who will receive you in a very courteous and benignant manner, desire you to repose on a soft seat, and persuade you to partake of a sumptuous banquet. But seat yourself on the ground, ask for a piece of common bread, and eat it; then deliver your message, and having received what you came

for, bribe the cruel dog with the remaining sop. When you have done as directed, return by the way you came to the choir of the celestial stars. But, above all things, let not curiosity prompt you to examine the contents of the box containing the divine beauty. Psyche, depart, and may the gods protect you. (*Psyche passes through the mouth of the cave, and Mercury goes out at the side.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Palace of Pluto. Proserpine on the throne; at her side is Pluto, her husband (both dressed in red); in her right hand she holds a two-forked trident, in her left the sacrificial cup; two serpents are entwined around her diadem; at her feet is a vase of narcissseans and a basket of pomegranites. Ate, her messenger, is in attendance. Cerberus, the dog, is to the left of the throne, at the entrance of the palace. In the rear, to the right, is an overhanging rock, ready to tumble down; Lapithae, Ixion and Pirithous are under it. A lofty genial couch, supported by golden pillars, under which is spread a sumptuous banquet, is within their reach; the chief of the Furies sits by them, and debar's them from touching the food, by lifting her torch on high. In front, sitting on the stage, is Theseus, with a large stone suspended over his head.*

Proserpine. What is the offence of Theseus?

Ate. Please your majesty, he sold his country for gold, and imposed on it a domineering tyrant; made and unmade laws for money.

Proserpine. A most heinous offence; let the punishment be continued.

Ate. Your majesty shall be obeyed.

Proserpine. Does Tityus still live, he whose immortal liver and bowels serve as food to the vulture, constantly prowling over him?

Ate. Your majesty, there is no respite given to him; his fibres still spring up afresh to serve for the banquet.

Proserpine. Tis well. Is the servant of Venus close at hand?

Ate. She is, your majesty. She was brought to the cave by Mercury, and is now crossing the river in the leaky boat of Charon.

Proserpine. Then she will soon be here; and may the gods return her in safety.

Ate. Your majesty, the maiden is at hand. (*Psyche enters, putting a sop in the mouth of the dog as she passes, then goes and sits at the foot of the throne.*)

Proserpine. Psyche, will you be seated at the table, and served with the delicious banquet before you?

Psyche. I am content, your majesty, to be at the foot of your throne, but pray a piece of common bread may be given to me. (*Atte hands her bread.*)

Proserpine. Do you bear a message from Venus?

Psyche. I do, your majesty. Venus requests you to send her a small portion of your beauty, at least as much as may be sufficient for one day. I have brought the box to carry it in. Pray receive it and let me depart to the light of day once more. (*Proserpine receives the box, opens it and looks in, then closes and returns it to Psyche.*)

Proserpine. You may now depart, Psyche, by the way you came. Remember to pacify the dog as you go out. (*Psyche goes out, putting a sop in the dog's mouth as she passes.*) Venus, with all her beauty and jealousy, fears Psyche; and well she may, as the wife of Cupid. Jupiter will protect her. No one has passed hence since Eurydice, the beloved wife of Orpheus, was set free and sent back to earth. Has Psyche passed out the mouth of the cave?

Atte. Yes, your majesty.

Proserpine. Let the signal be given to close the palace. (*Atte strikes a gong, when a black curtain is lowered, with paintings in red of Pluto in the centre; at the side, Charon in his boat; Proserpine carried away by Pluto. The Furies, the Fates, the Harpies, and Door of Hell. Cerberus is in front of the curtain, guarding a door; by his side a flash comes from the inside; above the door is written, "The Palace of Pluto." Infernal music until the scene changes.*)

SCENE 3.—The Cavern of Tenebris.

(*Enter PSYCHE from the mouth, with the box in her hand. She sits on a rock.*)

Psyche. Bless the gods! I again adore the fair light of day. Behold, (*examining the box*) what a foolish bearer am I of divine beauty, who do not take the least portion of it, that I may by this means appear pleasing in the eyes of my beautiful lover. (*Opens the box, when a cloud arises; she falls over as if suffocated, when Cupid appears.*)

Cupid. (*Brushing off the cloud of sleep, shutting up the box, and touching Psyche with one of his arrows.*) Behold! unhappy girl, again you have all but perished a victim to curiosity. Now, however, strenuously perform the task imposed upon you by my mother, and I myself will take care of the rest. (*Exit.*)

Psyche. It was a gentle spirit raised me from the infernal Stygian sleep cast upon me by curiosity. Let me be gone in haste, and carry the present of Proserpine to Venus, the rightful owner. (*Exit.*)

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—*Mount Olympus.*

The curtain rises, showing a scene of the Temple of Jupiter at Olympia.

JUPITER and CUPID in front; MERCURY at hand in his usual position, ready to move.

Cupid. Almighty Jove, to thee I now address myself. I come before thee with humbled mien, to crave a boon that is in thy power to give. Psyche, from whom I have been long separated, is my wife. Venus, my mother, is in deadly enmity with her; therefore, I pray that great Jupiter will have us joined in one love, and give us his kingly protection.

Jupiter. (*Kissing Cupid.*) Though you, my masterful son, never pay me that reverence which has been decreed me by the synod of the gods, but perpetually wound this breast of mine, by which the laws of the elements and the revolutions of the stars are governed, and frequently defile it with earthly intrigues, contrary to the laws, the Julian edict and public discipline, injuring my reputation and fame by base adulteries, and sordidly changing my serene countenance into serpents, fire, wild beasts, birds, and cattle; nevertheless, remembering my own moderation, and that you have been nursed in these hands of mine, I will accomplish all that you desire. At the same time, you must be sensible, that you ought to guard against rivals, and to recompense me for this service, by presenting me with any girl of transcendent beauty that may now happen to be upon the earth. Go, Mercury, bring Psyche at once to Heaven, and summon an assembly of all the gods, and at the same time proclaim that if any one of the Celestials absented himself, he should be fined ten thousand pieces of money. (*Mercury goes out.*) My son, we will now sit with the gods; you will meet your mother Venus, and I will see that you are fast tied to Psyche. Your marriage must be made legitimate. Go we now to the assembly. (*They go in the Temple.*) (*Music within, Apollo touching the strings of his lyre, while Muses accompany him with their voices and instruments. During the performance the curtain is drawn up, showing the inside of the Temple, and exhibiting a GRAND TABLEAU (Photograph).—Jupiter is sitting upon his throne; on his left arm leans the sceptre; in his right hand he holds the goblet, filled with nectar; at his feet stands his Eagle, looking up to him. Ganymede and Hebe in the foreground to the right, performing the office of cup-bearer. A little behind Jupiter, on his right, sits Juno; near her feet is the peacock. Venus stands on the left of Jupiter, her brow encircled by a wide gold band, and her hair falling gracefully over her shoulders; around her waist is a belt filled with natural roses; at her side stands Cupid. Beyond is Mercury introducing Psyche to Olympus. Neptune, seated with his*

trident on a bank of clouds, conversing with Pluto. In front of Neptune sits Vulcan, with the lion stretched at his side. Behind Juno stands Mars, in full armor. Next to Mars is Hercules, his head covered with a lion's skin. On the left, behind Jupiter, is Minerva. Close by her is Apollo, with the Muses at his side. Behind is Diana, with the crescent on her head. Two genii strew flowers on Psyche's head. The tableau is kept up until the music ceases, when Jupiter thus addresses the gods:)

Jupiter. Ye conscript gods, whose names are registered in the white roll of the Muses, you are all well acquainted with that youth, whom I have reared with my own hands, and the impetuous fire of whose juvenile years I deem it necessary to restrain by some bridle or other. It is sufficient that he is every day defamed in conversation for the adulteries and all manner of corruption of which he is the cause. Every occasion of this must be taken away, and his youthful libertinism must be bound in nuptial fetters. He has made choice of a girl, and deprived her of her virginity. Let him therefore hold her; let him possess her, and embracing Psyche, always enjoy the object of his love. (*To Venus.*) Nor do you, my daughter, be sorrowful on this occasion, nor fearful that your pedigree and rank will be disgraced by a mortal marriage; for I will now cause the nuptials not to be unequal, but legitimate and agreeable to the civil law. (*Hands Psyche a cup of ambrosia.*) Take this, Psyche, and be immortal; nor shall Cupid ever depart from your embrace, but these nuptials of yours shall be perpetual. (*Ganymede hands him a cup of nectar.*) This do I drink in commemoration of this happy event.

Venus. (*Embracing Psyche.*)

"Psyche! thou hardly hast my favor won:
Yet hence thy charms immortal deified
With the young joys thy future offspring fair,
Shall bloom for ever at thy lover's side;
All-ruling Jove's high mandates I declare,
Blest denizen of heaven! arise its joys to share."

(Apollo and the Muses commence playing and singing; the Hours enter and strew flowers about; the Graces also enter and scatter balsam; Venus and Psyche retire a little in the rear, and are joined by Cupid.)

Jupiter (when the music ceases). One more cup of nectar, Ganymede. (*Ganymede brings a cup.*) Bacchus will supply the rest. Vulcan, dress well the supper. Mercury, summon Bacchus. The nectar must flow freely to-night. Bid Satyrus play on the flute, and Persieus on the pipe. (*Mercury goes to the side, raises his wand, when Bacchus and the Satyrs come in.*) Mercury, prepare now, and let the dance begin. (*Mercury arranges the stage by placing the Hours, Muses and Graces on one side, the gods and goddesses on the other; Jupiter seated in front; the rest standing in their proper*

order. On the completion of the arrangement, Mercury raises his wand, when the trumpet sounds, and the Phrygian Dance begins.)

At the conclusion of the dance the trumpet sounds, when the dancers go off in pairs.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

THE PHRYGIAN DANCE.

The Phrygian dance is divided into four parts, and the one here introduced is the last, and called the Tetracomos. There seems to be no regular order for the figures, and for simplicity and ease in learning, I have arranged them as follows :

1st. The trumpet sounds to be ready, and when the music for the dance begins, the two leaders, male and female, dance to the front of the stage, followed by eight couples; then eight more dance out, and then the remaining eight, making a front of six, by eight deep, all in close order. Turn and dance to the rear, then back to the front.

2d. The dance will be in open order, as wide as the stage will admit; dancing to the rear, turn, and then to the front.

3d. In open order, to the rear and then to the front, turning and keeping in line.

4th. Dance into line on the right of the stage; when formed, cease dancing, the male dancers holding up their right hands, the females their left. The leaders then pass in review before them, dancing to appropriate martial music.

5th. In breaking up the line, various figures, such as the wedge, triangle, circles, stars, squares, and any others to suit the fancy of the leaders, are formed; after which a line is formed in close order in the centre of the stage, moving into open order, the males and females in separate lines. When the trumpet sounds, and the leaders dance off the stage, followed by the dancers, commencing at the front of the stage, who pair off as they go out.

The proper movement for the dance is slow and majestic; but the polka step would probably be more appropriate in the arrangement of the figures, and would better suit the present taste of our people.

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